

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: Ben Bedoya

"My mom and dad used to buy small baby pigs. Every two or three years, they would slaughter 'em and then sell the meat. Just to make extra money. And my chore was to feed the pigs in the morning before I go school. You see, our pigs were kept in a pigpen. And where my house used to be, used to be a stream above us. And there used to be a bridge across the stream, to where the pigs are kept. And we would cross the bridge to go there and feed the pigs. We would wash them down and then feed 'em, and then go school. What we used to feed 'em was . . . pig grass. We used to go pick, dig 'em out, put 'em in the barley bags, as much as we can, get two or three or four bags, and bring 'em home. And my mom would be waiting with a big fifty-five-gallon drum, half-cut, with the water boiling. We would throw that pig grass in there to cook 'em with the barley and all that, mixed up. We feed that to the pigs. I used to do that, shee, since the time I started grade school to the time I graduate from grade school, we were doing that."

The fifth of seven children, Ben Bedoya was born in 1934 at Mill Camp, Pioneer Mill Company plantation, Maui. His parents, Maximina and Macario Bedoya, immigrated to West Maui from Cebu City, Philippines in the 1920s. Ben spent his childhood and teenage years living in Mill Camp.

Bedoya attended King Kamehameha III School and Lahainaluna High School. He spent his summers working in the sugar fields of Pioneer Mill Company.

After graduating in 1954, Bedoya enlisted in the U.S. Army. After working a variety of jobs, Bedoya in 1971 was employed by Kapi'olani Medical Center and, later, Queen's Medical Center, as a supply manager.

Bedoya retired in 1997. He lives in Honolulu. He and his wife, Janice, raised a son. Bedoya has one grandson.

Tape No. 39-6-1-02

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Ben Bedoya (BB)

Honolulu, O'ahu

December 11, 2002

BY: Warren Nishimoto (WN)

WN: This is an interview with Ben Bedoya for the Pioneer Mill oral history project, on December 11, 2002, and we're at McDonald's in Kāhala Mall. The interviewer is Warren Nishimoto.

Okay Ben. Let's start. First of all, can you tell me when and where you were born?

BB: Oh, I was born in Lahaina, Maui, 1934, in the old Pioneer Mill Hospital located on Front Street next to the new shopping center we have now.

WN: Which shopping center is that?

BB: Where the post office is now. Right next door used to be the—I don't know what shopping center they have now, over there. In that area over there. Back in 1934, I was born there.

WN: Tell me about your parents.

BB: Well, my parents, they came from the Philippines. They came from Cebu. They came here way back in 1920-something. My dad was one of those immigrants that was under the contract labor. He worked for Pioneer Mill ever since he came here.

WN: Did he tell you anything about his life in the Philippines?

BB: No, he didn't tell me too much. Of course, my dad didn't know too much English at the time. As he started getting used to Hawai'i, he started to talk in broken English. He learned from us on that. But he did pretty well in his English, you know. He understands. My mom was pretty good in English.

What he told us was that, before he left the Philippines, we had an older sister that they had left behind because the grandma wanted someone to stay back. So my oldest sister is still living in the Philippines right now. She stayed back with my grandma. Back in the 1960s, we were grown up already, so the family got together and spent some money to send my oldest sister back here to see my mom and dad. That's the only time she visited Hawai'i. All I know right now is that she's still living in the Philippines, in Cebu.

WN: So she was already born when your parents came over here?

BB: Yeah, she was already born. Actually, what I found out was that we had seven of us here, but before that, according to my mom and dad, the total in the family was fourteen, but some of them died because, in the old days, they got sick. So we didn't get to know (my sister or brother). In fact, three of them are buried in Lahaina.

WN: How many of you are surviving now?

BB: Right now, in Hawai'i, we have only four. My oldest brother, Francis, is still living in Lahaina. My younger sister (Dora) lives in Kahului. Francis is a retired plantation worker; he used to work for the mill repair shop, automotive side. And my younger sister, after graduating from school in 1957, she moved to LA [Los Angeles] and worked there for an insurance company. And she came back about five, six years ago. Got employed at Eldorado [Market & Activities]. She's a manager at Eldorado. My older sister, Mary, lives here in Honolulu. She's retired from Hawaiian Tel[ephone Company] and she has a daughter named Sharon. She works for Hawaiian Tel also. And I got several nieces here (in Honolulu). My sister who works for Eldorado has a daughter (Diane) living in Honolulu. She has two kids. My sister's daughter, Sharon, has a daughter (named Erika). She graduated from (McKinley High School and) University of Hawai'i and she's working for KSSK radio station here in Honolulu. As for me, I have one son (named Vincent). He's a graduate of (Kaiser High School and) Hilo College [today, University of Hawai'i-Hilo], played baseball—made all-star. I have a grandson. He just made five years old (chuckles). He's a rascal—headache.

(Laughter)

BB: As for me, I'm retired from Queen's Medical Center. My wife (Janice)---we were married for thirty-two years before she passed away back in '94. She was a nurse at Queen's for thirty-some-odd years. Put that together, both of us probably had life's work with Queen's for at least fifty years or more.

WN: Tell me about your father. What kind of work did he do for Pioneer Mill?

BB: Well, my dad was a laborer. He worked out in the sugar fields. He worked in the fields since the time he came to Hawai'i back in the late twenties—1925, something around there. He retired from Pioneer Mill plantation back in 1970. So, all the time he's been here in Hawai'i, was being a plantation laborer. Worked in the sugarcane fields.

WN: And you folks grew up in Mill Camp. How come you folks were living in Mill Camp?

BB: I don't know exactly how we got there, but my mom folks, ever since we were born and raised in Lahaina, we always were living in Mill Camp, where the plantation mill is. I've never asked them how we got there, but that's all I know: we lived in Mill Camp since the time I was born to the time I graduated from Lahainaluna High School (in 1954) and went in the [military] service. But, all my life, I know the whole family lived in Lahaina.

WN: So what was Mill Camp like? Who lived in Mill Camp?

BB: Well, Mill Camp was just like the rest of the camps that were around Lahaina. Keawe Camp was to the west of Mill Camp. And to the east side would be Lahaina Pump [Camp], or Waive'e [Camp]. We used to call it Lahaina Pump [Camp]. And then above us, below Lahainaluna High School, would be Kelaweia Camp.

In fact, in Mill Camp, I remember when they were building the plantation warehouse in front of our place—the warehouse is still there—what I remember was that we used to have a community get-together every year. And we would get chicken *hekka*. Everybody would bring whatever they can. Right in the warehouse there we would have games, music. This is all the Mill Camp people. And they would get together in a community-like thing, and they would bring potluck. They would cook chicken *hekka*—I remember I used to love the chicken *hekka*, with *musubi* and whatever (chuckles). Those old-days-kind food, eh? There were a lot of Filipinos, Japanese, Hawaiians—we were all together. We were never apart where you say, “Oh, you Hawaiian, we no care about you.” Just that lovable type of community. Everybody knows each other. You open your door, “Oh, c’mon, come in. You have lunch already? Come in. Come eat.” And then later on, they would let the parents know that, “Oh, your son or daughter had lunch with us.” Community awareness was so close. There was no trouble about who you were. It was just a matter of friendship all over the place.

And we used to get (involved with) sports. The kids, like us, that age, we all played baseball with the other camps, like Keawe Camp, Kelawea [Camp], they would make their own baseball team, and we would make our own team (from Mill Camp). And we would play against each other. We used to play our games in the back of—it’s now called the Citizens’ Unit [a.k.a., Citizens’ Quarters]—where the [U.S.] Marines used to [have their barracks].

WN: What was it called? Citizen . . .

BB: We used to call that “Citizens’ Unit.” That’s where the marines had their barracks. This was just below the mill, as you going up Lahainaluna Road.

WN: So there was a field over there?

BB: Yeah, there was a field in the back, where we would play baseball and softball, like that. And there was a basketball court (and tennis court). I remember playing there. That’s how I got started playing for the high school team. In fact, in grade school time I used to play baseball and basketball for the school. When I graduated from grade school and went to Lahainaluna, I went out for the high school team. I turned out for the junior varsity, that time. And I ended being picked to play for the varsity team in my freshman year. So, in those days, you’re looked up as a hero, playing for the high school varsity team. (My junior year) we took the MIL [Maui Interscholastic League] champ (in basketball). I was one of the all-star boys on the team. We used to love it because—that’s a big thing in Lahaina where the kids would play baseball and (basketball and softball and) the folks would all come out. After that, the best part about it was that, after we’re finished playing, (we would have potluck and) the parents bring all the food. (We eat and eat!)

(Laughter)

BB: Everybody would get together and bring the food. That’s what we looked forward to: the food and *talk story* about the game, and whatnot.

WN: So you learned your baseball on the plantation, then?

BB: I learned baseball (and basketball) on the plantation. The coach that actually taught me how to play baseball was Shigeo Wakida. And he’s well known. He’s been coaching

tennis for the school. I remember him teaching us how to play baseball: how to catch, how to slide, and to be mentally awake. The best about it was to show your sportsmanship, whether you win or lose. Be competitive, but still maintain your poise and friendship.

WN: So Mr. Wakida, was he your coach for your Mill Camp team?

BB: Well, he wasn't our coach at Mill Camp because he was living in Keawe [Camp], but all the kids who wanted to learn baseball, he would go down the park and meet them. "Okay, you folks want to learn, come and learn. Feel free to come by and learn baseball." I loved my sports, so I went there and he really taught baseball to me. And there was a guy named Nobu Yoshino.

WN: I talked to him yesterday.

BB: Yeah? He used to be our (Maui Camp) basketball and baseball coach. He was from our camp, so he would be the coach for our team.

WN: He was from Mill Camp?

BB: Yeah, he's from Mill Camp. He still lives in Lahaina. I remember him coaching us for baseball and basketball. And he would say the same things what Mr. Wakida would teach us: sportsmanship. When you lose, you don't put your head down. Keep it high. You give praise for the team that won, but still show your sportsmanship. That's what I learned from them.

WN: So the name of the team that you grew up with was "Mill Camp"?

BB: We used to call it "Kuhua."

WN: And you had to live in Mill Camp to play for the Mill Camp team?

BB: Yeah. We had lot of teams: Keawe Camp . . .

WN: Who else had a team?

BB: Kelaweia had a team.

WN: Kelaweia . . .

BB: And Waine'e—Lahaina Pump—the boys up there.

WN: So Lahaina Pump and Waine'e same name?

BB: Same name. Lahaina Pump is the nickname for that place [Waine'e].

WN: What else? What about Pu'ukoli'i?

BB: Pu'ukoli'i had too. Pu'ukoli'i and Honokōwai were combined because Honokōwai was a small place. They had some boys playing for Pu'ukoli'i.

WN: Olowalu had a team?

BB: No, Olowalu didn't have. The Morishimas—Eddie Morishima—was well known for baseball in Lahaina. Because [Olowalu is] where Wally Yonamine grew up. They used to play for the Downtown team, the Lahaina team.

WN: Oh, they had a Downtown team, too?

BB: They used to have an association called Plebes Association. These guys were all the Lahaina Downtown people.

WN: Oh, so not plantation?

BB: No. We would play them in basketball (and baseball). It was a big thing, sports, in Lahaina. Friends and the parents would come around. Those days, in sports, I could remember all those things.

WN: Was there a gym?

BB: Well, the only gym they had was at Lahainaluna High School. The [outdoor] basketball court that we used to have was called Campbell Park. Was right in Lahaina town where the Pioneer [Inn] hotel is, right above it. There used to be a small bowling alley there, about eight (or ten) lanes also, in that area. But we used to play basketball at Campbell Park, right there.

WN: Was a outdoor court?

BB: Outdoor courts, community type. Wasn't a gym. The only gym we had was the school's. So that's how I learned to play basketball and baseball. And like I said, when I finished grade school, I tried out for the high school team. My freshman year—that was back in '50—I didn't realize that I would make the varsity, because I was trying out for the junior varsity team. And the head coach for the varsity was Norman Oda. He was the Lahainaluna coach for basketball and football. He would always ask me to come out and play for the football team. But I've never cared to play football. I loved the game and I watched, but I've never cared to play football. I would rather play basketball and baseball. So Norman Oda would say, "Oh, come out for the basketball team." When they had the notice for the basketball tryout posted for the school, he made sure that I show up, because he talked to me about it. So I tried out. And after that first tryout, I just went in the locker room, washed up, and I went home. I didn't know that they had picked the team, who was going to be for the varsity and who was on JV. And they were looking for me. I thought I didn't make it. The next day, Norman Oda called me and said, "What happened to you?"

I said, "Oh, *pau* practice. I figured I didn't make the team. I got cut, so I went home."

He said, "No, no. You show up tomorrow."

So when I showed up, they were practicing again. I was looking around, "Eh, the guys that I'm practicing with are second-year players on the varsity. The older guys. What am I doing here?"

And at that time, Norman Oda was working for the plantation (and was a few minutes late. When he arrived) he called us together and he started introducing the players to each other. I was only a freshman that time, when I made the team. "This is Ben Bedoya, freshman, and so and so." I used to play with Abraham Kaniho, Robert Nakihei, George

Kaanana. Bob Nakihei is from Moloka'i. And George Kaanana is from Kahului. And there was a guy, Lewellyn Babeyan, he's from Moloka'i, but he passed away. Those were my teammates from the time I started. Those guys are the guys that was with me from freshman to senior. And all four of us made all-star, that time. Abe Kaniho right now, he lives in Kuli'ou'ou.

WN: Oh year? How do you spell his last name?

BB: K-A-N-I-H-O.

WN: Okay. Abe, huh?

BB: Yeah, Abe Kaniho. He lives in Kuli'ou'ou. I'll get the number for you. And Bob Nakihei, he's from Moloka'i. I don't know if he's still working for mass transit—The Bus. I know he was working there as a union rep.

WN: Now, was Abe a Lahaina boy, or a [Lahainaluna School] border?

BB: Yeah, Lahaina boy. Bob Nakihei was a boarder. George Kaanana was a boarder too. He's from Kahului side.

WN: Tell me about Mill Camp. How many houses were there? How many families, you would say?

BB: As far as families were concerned, there was more than 200 families, you know, over there. Our camp was just like one of the biggest ones in Lahaina.

WN: So Mill Camp was where they have the homes now right near the mill?

BB: Yeah, if you're going up to Lahainaluna High School, Mill Camp would be just above the mill.

WN: So like Aki Street, and all those . . .

BB: Yeah, (Kuhua Street). The (first left turn above the pioneer) mill? They have new houses now, so the name of the roads today are different. From there all the way down to the old tractor shop, above (Mill Camp) that would be Kelawea [Camp]. Kelawea would be smaller one, just about at the top of the hill just before you get to Lahainaluna. Where that [Lahaina] Intermediate School is, that area is Kelawea. In fact, I think there was a ditch, if I remember, which separated Kelawea from Kuhua [i.e., Mill Camp]. We used to walk along the ditch. We used to catch all those tadpoles in that stream there. That was good for bait, yeah, for fishing. So we would go in there, catch the tadpoles, and go down to the old Māla Wharf, and go fishing down there.

WN: Now Mill Camp, was it mostly skilled laborers living in there?

BB: I would say the majority of them worked for the plantation, the laborers.

WN: So they didn't like, mostly work in the mill?

BB: There were quite a few of them working in the mill, but I would say, probably 70 percent would be working in the fields. But like my brother Francis, the oldest one now, he used to work in the mill, but he used to be in the repair shop where they repaired the

automotives, and all that. And my third brother, the one that passed away, Joe, he used to work inside the mill, the machinist side, with the welders and all that. So I would say, mostly would be the plantation workers, the old folks.

WN: So you didn't have to work in the mill to live in Mill Camp?

BB: No, no. There were guys from Keawe Camp, Kelawea [Camp], and Lahaina Pump [Camp], they would be working in the mill, too. So I would say, not only the Mill Camp people. It's just that the mill was right in our area. And you had that train, the railroad tracks over there that would haul the sugarcane, would be right in front of our house, too. They had the area where they would park 'em overnight, over there.

I would say that Mill Camp was the focus of the plantation. The sugar mill is right there, then you had the tractor repair shop with all the equipment, all the cranes, that they repair was right in front of my house. So I would say that Mill Camp would be where everything is concentrated in the plantation. When I worked during the summers, in the morning we'd get up at four o'clock. We'd walk along the tracks and go down to the back of the mill . . .

WN: How far was that?

BB: Oh, it's about, maybe from here to Long's, like that.

WN: Oh, so it was about, what, 100 yards?

BB: About 100 yards, 100 or 200, somewhere around there. Right below the mill would have the stable, the horses over there that they used in the sugar fields for plant the cane. Carry the [seed] up into the mountains. So the stable would be there below the mill.

WN: Is that where your father worked?

BB: No, my father worked out in the fields. He would go on a truck and go out in the fields and work. He was just a plain labor man, you know. So I would say that Mill Camp would be the focus of the plantation.

WN: Were you one of the few Filipinos in the camp?

BB: In Mill Camp, we used to have not very much Filipinos. We had, I would say, about ten or fifteen families. The rest would be mostly Japanese. And there would be few Hawaiian families, but very few.

WN: So you folks all got along?

BB: Oh, yeah, we all got along. Like I said, I remember those plantation days when we had that big *furoba*, the community one, you know. And we would all take a bath in the same *furoba*. The women's [section] would be on one side; the men would be on one side. But, like us, we were so rascal, we'd waste all the hot water. We would play around. The old folks would take a bath first, and they would chase us out because they knew what we going do (WN laughs). The old folks would take a bath first, and we don't want to get scolding, so we would wait until they finish, and then we'll go inside. And we just throw water all over the place (WN laughs). It's a big one, you know.

WN: How big was? About twenty feet [square]?

- BB: About there, yeah. The *wahine furoba* would be on the opposite side.
- WN: And only separated by a wall?
- BB: Separated by a board. In the middle of the community bathhouse would be a big boiler room, in between. One would be the women's side; one would be the men's side. (Chuckles) We would be rascal because we used to play with the girls, rascal kind of stuff (laughs). It was unique, though, because everybody who would take a bath would come from their house. Just walking [seventy-five yards] or something. We would bring our own soap, our towel, and our bucket for wash, and all that.
- WN: Where would you folks actually wash before you went inside the *furo*?
- BB: Oh, well, when you get inside there, there's a shower. You would wash [your body] before you get in. Like us, we rascal. The shower was to wash out all the dirtiness before you get into the clean [*furo*] water, right? And the water is hot. Like us, we don't want the cold [i.e., shower] water, so we just take off our clothes, we jump inside (WN laughs). So, the old folks, they don't like that. They're so traditional that they would wash themselves, and then they would go into the hot water. So that's why, like us, we always get scolding for jumping in the water too quick, without washing out there first.
- WN: So you folks would just like, swimming pool, then?
- BB: Yeah, it was like a swimming pool to us. We would climb up and dive into the *furoba*. All the hot water would get wasted, eh?
- WN: (Laughs) How was the water heated?
- BB: The water was heated by the boiler. They had the boiler between [i.e., in the middle of] the building. If I remember, there was a guy that used to take care of that. But we'd come about four o'clock, you know, *pau* work, eh? So he leaves, but the hot water is there already inside the big tank. (Laughs) We used to get scolding all the time from the old folks, because we no wash ourselves; we just jump inside (laughs) with our feet dirty, like that. They would get mad with us; they chase us out. "You guys come later." So every time when we go, we see the old folks inside there, we no go inside. When you go inside, there's lot of cubbyholes, you put your clothes inside, when you take a shower. Your towel, and all that. So we would put that over there, but we would run out, because they would chase us out. They know what we going do (laughs).
- WN: You could go any time of the day?
- BB: Actually, we could go from, let's say, two o'clock in the afternoon. Because during the morning, they'd clean it out, put new water. So, maybe after lunch we probably could take a shower and a bath.
- WN: You guys had to pay?
- BB: No, we never did pay. It's a community thing.
- WN: So had one for the whole camp?
- BB: Yeah, one big bathhouse. And get the women, and the men . . .

WN: Any families had their own, in their own house?

BB: I'm pretty sure they had. Not everybody used to come there [the community *furo*], only us rascal kids (laughs). But I do remember that we had lot of people going, taking a bath over there. They called it a community bath.

And right next door to the community bath used to have a clubhouse. And every so often they would have movies—free movies. Those days, they used to show the *obake-neko* kind movie. You know, ghost movies, and all that kind stuff. The whole camp would come and the clubhouse would be filled. But they would open the windows so we can stand on the side and watch from the outside. And the front door would be wide open, so the people outside can see inside, too. And we would see all this kind *obake-neko* kind of movie. And Tange Sazen [a one-eyed, one-armed swordsman]. In those days, we used to see all those things. And what would happen, next day, young kids, you know, copycat. We would cut the branch and make sword out of that. We would play fight sword and make gang-gang. One guy would make like Tange Sazen, you know, one-eyed . . .

WN: One-armed, too, yeah?

BB: So we would imitate those guys. Every time they would get that kind of movie, and they would get that *obake-neko* kind of movie. That's the one we'd like. Because the shows would be at night, right? So every time when *pau*, and the plantation no more [outdoor] lights—only get one post light, and it's far apart. So when the movie is over—and it's like ten o'clock already—and everybody going home, right? So what we would do, we'd run way in the front, and somebody would bring a white sheet. And the guy comes walking with the girl. I would be one of the guys with a sheet. You should see all the girls scream, and everybody's screaming. Because we scaring the girls because of the movie.

Those days was a lot of fun, because we would wait for those days to see that kind of movie. It's always going to be samurai, or *obake-neko* kind. Once in a while, they'd get the love kind, but the love kind, we no go (WN laughs). Because we don't understand it. We want that exciting kind: fighting, samurai kind of stuff. Sometimes they get love story—the old folks, they cry (laughs). We don't know what going on, so we don't watch.

WN: They had English movies, too?

BB: They had English movies, too, you know. But those days, we loved the *obake* kind, that's the best kind of movie.

WN: Did you have to pay to go to the movies?

BB: No, we didn't have to pay. It's just community. Somebody would rent the movies, I guess. I don't know, I've never paid so (laughs) it was free, so what the hell (laughs). And in that same clubhouse, Nobu Yoshino would get the boys together, and he would tell us, "Next week Saturday, there will be a sunny side." The word sunny side tells us that they going have a dance. Get the song, "On the Sunny Side of the Street." And the boys would come and clean up the clubhouse, make ready for the night. And we would have dance. And I used to love dancing.

WN: What kind dancing?

BB: Regular foxtrot, waltz, and other kind stuff. Those days, I didn't know what was ballroom dancing. All we knew was that we learned to dance foxtrot, tango, waltz. So every time Nobu would say, "Hey, next week, sunny side."

"Okay, okay," We'd get together, clean up the clubhouse. The girls would help decorate the place little bit. And we'd have our get-together that night. That's how close we were with the girls and the boys. We would have dancing and all that kind. And Nobu was one of those guys that we used to look up to. We used to have a lot of fun in those days, Mill Camp. I mean, the other camps would be the same, too, you know. That's why, those plantation days, there's no such thing as "You enemy." Or "You Hawaiian." Or "You Filipino." It was close-knit.

WN: So those functions, like that, at the clubhouse, did people from other camps come to those functions, too, at the clubhouse?

BB: Yeah, once in a while the boys [from other camps] would come. They would come just to dance with the girls, like that. The boys we knew from other camps, we would tell, "Oh, come, come, good fun." And if they liked dancing, they'd come around. So used to have guys from the other camps come around and dance, like that. So, those plantation days---now, they have a lot of [organized] youth stuff. But, I don't know, I feel that those plantation days, we were close-knit. Those days was something we don't see anymore.

WN: You know, 1946, after the union came in, did you notice any difference from what the plantation provided for you folks, before and after the union came in? Or was it the same?

BB: We were young, that time, but I can remember it was really rough on all the families when the plantation goes on strike. I remember, those days, when they had the big strike on the plantation, I remember going down to the Citizens' Unit, they had what they call a soup line [i.e., soup kitchen]. The family would bring pots, go down there with the family, and get their soup, food, like that, and come home. Those days really changed some way of living, I guess, with the union strike and all that. They became more close, more tight. Everybody got to know how to work together after the strike. They learned what's bad and what's good. The way I saw it, to me, it brought more people together. You know, working together. From the different camps, especially. They all reported to one union. Where the clubhouse was, all the union guys, the families, go there and help serve the food, and all that. I remember those days.

WN: Was your father involved?

BB: Yeah, he was involved in that, too. My mom—the old folks—when it comes to that kind of community stuff, they just willing to make anything. Cook anything they want—their culture—and they'd bring it together, those days. I was small that time, but I remember those days, it was really rough. As I look back, the way things were, everything was cheap, but still was rough for the families. I remember when I used to work for the plantation during the summers, our pay rate was fifty cents [an hour].

WN: When did you start working?

BB: When I was a freshman.

WN: You were a freshman in 1950, yeah?

- BB: Yeah. I started to work summertime. That's when they allowed us to work. And those days, after they harvested the field, they called it *palipali*. You carry your pick and hoe, because you have to go straighten out the lines. Those days, to get paid, you would need a *bangō*. But I forgot the number (laughs).
- WN: You still got your number?
- BB: I forget my number, but I remember the *bangō*—you know, the metal thing with the hole on it so you can carry 'em on your self, so the *luna* can look at your *bangō*. Because, when we report to work, you take your *bangō*, so they know that you work. It's just like punching in, eh, the time clock. And I remember, I would give my mom that [the *bangō*] when come to payday time. She would go to the plantation office and line up and pick up our check. My dad, older brothers, and me, and my younger brother. So, there was five of us that she would pick up. It wasn't really big pay, but fifty cents an hour, eight hours a day. Every summer we'd be working, practically every day.
- WN: Before we get into work, I wanted to ask you, what kind of chores you had at home. Did you have chores at home?
- BB: Oh, yeah. Chores is a (laughs) good one. My mom and dad used to buy little pigs, you know, small baby pigs. And they would raise them. My brother's and my chores was to feed the pigs every morning before we go school.
- WN: How many pigs had?
- BB: We had two. We'd always buy two small ones. They would raise it for so many years. Every two or three years, they would slaughter 'em and then sell the meat. Just to make extra money. And my chore was to feed the pigs in the morning before I go school. You see, our pigs were kept in a pigpen. And where my house used to be, used to be a stream above us. And there used to be a bridge across the stream, to where the pigs are kept. The pigpen was along the stream. And we would cross the bridge to go there and feed the pigs. We would wash them down and then feed 'em, and then go school. What we used to feed 'em was, we used to go out into the plantation fields where they would just recently harvest the fields. Those pig grass.
- WN: Oh, what kind grass?
- BB: Pig grass, they called that pig grass. We used to go pick, dig 'em out, put 'em in the barley bags, as much as we can, get two or three or four bags, and bring 'em home. And my mom would be waiting with a big fifty-five-gallon drum, half-cut, with the water boiling. We would throw that pig grass in there to cook 'em. That's what we fed the pigs, with the barley and all that, mixed up. We fed that to the pigs. Shee, since the time I started grade school to the time I graduate from grade school, we were doing that.
- WN: So besides the pig grass and the barley, what else was in there? I mean, any leftovers, slop . . .
- BB: They used to have pig slop. We used to go collect from our neighbors, the slop. We just collect 'em in the bucket, and we bring it home. We would carry it just like the old Chinese people when they would go around and sell things as peddlers.
- WN: Oh, the two buckets on the stick?

BB: Yeah. We would get that. One would be the pig grass, and one would be the slop. We would feed the pigs in that long, barrel thing . . .

WN: You mean, a trough?

BB: Trough. Put it in there, mix 'em up. That's what we'd do.

WN: Let me just turn the . . .

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

WN: Okay.

BB: We would do that every morning. School starts at eight, right? So we'd get up at five-thirty in the morning, wash up, eat breakfast, and then we would go feed the pigs. But, as I say, being so rascal, sometimes I make believe I feed the pigs, but I never feed 'em. I run away and go school. My mom would go back in the morning, after she take care all the chores at home, you know, feeding us in the morning, she would go check the pigs, you know, go wash 'em down or something. She knows that the pigs wasn't fed because there's nothing in the trough, right? She would get mad like hell. So she would have to go back home and get some food and feed the pigs. Then when I come home, that's when I get it.

WN: You get licking?

BB: Those days, "abuse" is not a word that they've ever heard of. So I would get hit on the leg with the belt, whipped, because I was the one that was supposed to feed the pigs and I didn't feed 'em (laughs).

WN: So your mother was in charge of that kind stuff?

BB: Yeah, she would make sure that we feed 'em and she would go up and check the pigs out because, sometimes, after the pigs eat, they would remove their bowels, eh? So she would go down and wash 'em down, keep the pen clean. That's how neat my mom was. We gotta clean 'em. We got a hard brush and wash 'em down and scrub 'em up. You know, we didn't want anything hanging around, like that.

WN: How far was the pigpen from your house?

BB: Fifty yards, about there. We had to walk right on the side and go across the bridge. [The pigpen] used to be across the stream. The worse part about feeding the pig was, when there was a big rain, that stream would be flooded. And that bridge was not a really strong bridge.

WN: A wooden bridge?

BB: It's a wooden bridge with the legs stuck on the rock underneath, the flat rock, to hold 'em up.

WN: How wide was the stream?

BB: The stream was about, maybe, from here to the stop sign, like this.

WN: Okay, about twenty yards. Wide, eh?

BB: Yeah, it was wide. When the flood came, it would knock the legs off, it would swing. But you can still go across. But with those things we carry, cannot carry all one time, so we had to go one by one, back and forth, and hold onto the rope, and get across, and get the other one, come back. All the debris would come and knock off the base. And when the rain stopped and the water subsided, we'd go back and put the legs back on. Make it more stiff. So, some days would be rough for us to get across because we'd have to go slowly. You don't want to fall into the stream.

So those would be one of my chores. The other chore would be to clean the house, the yard, like that. And I would be rascal because my job was to clean the yard certain days. I would run away and go play baseball or basketball, you know. And I would get abused again (laughs).

WN: This was mostly from your mother? Your mother was in charge of all the household chores?

BB: Yeah, she did. Because my dad was out in the plantation working, eh? And my older brothers were out working too. I would be the worse one in the family, because I would get abused all the time.

(Laughter)

BB: I would get licking all the time, every time. Even my neighbors would remember me. I would be in the front of the yard, for not doing my chores, they [parents] used to punish me. And all those plantation trucks would come home at three o'clock in the afternoon. They all stop in front of my house, and they would see me there, without clothes, because my mom would punish me. I would be hung . . .

WN: Yeah, so tell me how that worked. How did you get punished?

BB: Okay. I was supposed to do chores, and I would run away, and mom would check if I'd done it or not. When she sees that I haven't done anything, she would wait until I come home. When I come home and in the house, she would lock the door to the room where I'm at. She would lock herself in the room with me. And she would grab me. I wouldn't fight back because I knew the more I fight back and the more I talk back, it's going to get worse. She would hit me first with a yardstick, then take me down to the front of the house. And there's two big mango trees, and there's a pipe across the trees, about four-inch pipe. That we used for swing, you know, when you small, you make your own swing, right? She would move the swing and would tie my hands, hang me up . . .

WN: By the wrists?

BB: By the wrists, over the pipe, like this.

WN: Your hands are above your head?

BB: Yeah. And I would barely touch the ground. Just my toes would touch the ground. And I would be naked.

WN: Totally naked?

BB: Totally naked.

WN: No pants, nothing?

BB: Nothing. She would do it just before the plantation workers come home, because the plantation workers would stop right in front my house (and get off the) in the truck. All the workers would (see me being) punished for one-hour-and-a-half, or one hour.

WN: One hour. Wow!

BB: Yeah. So naughty, that's why. So my neighbors, lot of them are women coming home from work. They would see me like that, they would laugh (WN laughs). And, you know, you small time, you say anything, swear at them. "I going punch you in the mouth. What you looking at?" Yelling at them. My neighbors would just giggle and go home because they know that I'm the rascal.

WN: And how old were you around this time?

BB: That time, I was about eight, nine years old. Even now, when I go home [to Lahaina] we sit around *talk story*. And this old thing would come out, and they would tell their friend, "This one here is really the rascal one in the family. His mother used to hang him up on the tree. Every time when we would come home *pau* work time and we would see him over there hanging without clothes."

WN: Did that happen often?

BB: Very often (laughs).

WN: Really? I mean, so, you didn't learn from that?

(Laughter)

BB: I was so naughty. I just loved my sports. I just ran away because my friends going play, and I get jealous. I tell myself, oh, I going come back and do it. By the time I noticed, it's late part of the day already, and my mom already know I never do my chores, right? So, I would be the one punished for it. And this is true because my neighbors, the girls, they know. I was the one that had too much *giri-giri* on my head (laughs).

WN: Okay, so, you told me some stuff that you did to have fun as a kid. What else did you do to have fun?

BB: You know, the plantation tractor shop was right in front of my house. And they don't work on Saturdays, right? These cars that they had---they called it a Fudson car. These are the ones they used to plant the sugarcane in the fields. They always had about seven of them parked in the back of the tractor shop. And on Saturday, the late part of the afternoon, nobody around, eh? So we would go in the back. And the ignition key would always be in it, you know. Five of us would get on one of each, and when we started it, we would race it in the back, back and forth. The *luna*---somebody probably called him

or something, told him that the kids are fooling around in the back, on the machinery stuff. So he would come. And when we see him, on his pickup truck, we would jump off the thing, and the thing would be going yet (laughs). We forget to turn 'em off. They would bang each other. And we gone already, we running away all over the place.

So, okay, Monday come, here comes the *luna*. My house is right in front of the place, right? I would be the first one he would pick out. He knew I was there because he saw me (laughs). He would pick me out. "Okay, who the other boys?" And you know, you all scared, eh? You squeal! (Laughs) All five of us go in his truck, take us to the plantation office. We would get scolding from the big boss. My parents would come, and I would get abused again!

(Laughter)

BB: I would get hit with the stick, the belt, anything. Like I say, I was so naughty. Those days, we used to do that all the time. And we never stopped; we never learned. We keep on doing it. We wouldn't do it for maybe one or two months, then we would go back and do it again.

One day, one of the boys went on the crane. The crane was parked in the back for repair. And the boom was facing toward the shop. And somehow, he got the crane started. This is the crane, now, with the big boom. It was parked in the back because they were gonna do some repair work, I guess. He started the crane, and he started to fool around with all those handles. And (the crane started to) move (laughs)!

WN: How old was he?

BB: He was just about our age, about ten, eleven years old (WN laughs). He didn't know how to stop 'em. And the thing kept going, going, going, and the boom is long, right? He went right through the tractor shop window, the back side. Right through the shop. The crane boom hit the window and went right through. When the crane was just about to hit the window, we all took off! The guy that made the crane start, he took off, too!

(Laughter)

BB: The crane kept going. The only way the crane stopped was when it hit the window, and the boom went inside, and there was another crane in front, in repair. It went and hit that crane, and it stopped, because it wasn't going fast. And the thing was sitting in the window like that, all the glass was all broken. And the crane stopped.

And that was on the weekend, now. Monday come, (the workers) they said, "What the hell is this crane doing like this?" Here come the *luna* (WN laughs). My house, Bedoya first. Pick me up, he knew I was there, too. Squeal again!

(Laughter)

BB: Oh shoot! The parents had to pay for the damage, because the crane (broke the) windows, eh? Like the other time, nothing was damaged, we only get scolding, warning, and all that. But this one, the crane broke, so we had to pay. So, plantation time payday, they just take the money out. They deduct, eh? Abused again! Hung me up on the tree again! This time was longer. I was hanging for about two, three hours in the afternoon.

WN: Were you the only one that got punished like that? What about all your friends?

- BB: My friends, the parents, I don't know what they did with 'em. I was the worst. My mother was that strict, you know. She was so mad with me.
- WN: Were you the only Filipino in the group?
- BB: No, had some other Filipino guys, but I don't know what the parents did [as punishment]. I was the worst of it. When the plantation trucks stopped, and I would be there like this, all bare-ass, no more clothes, no more nothing.
- WN: What about swimming? You folks did swimming?
- BB: Yeah, we used to do swimming. The stream that I mentioned earlier, about feeding the pigs? That stream, we go further up, used to be a pond. And when the storm is over, the pond is (filled with water). We would swim with the tadpoles and all; all the frogs inside there. But we enjoyed our swimming.
- WN: Was this a pond, or was it a reservoir? Irrigation . . .
- BB: It's just a pond. They made a cement thing over the mound of it, because the plantation guys, they drive the trucks over to get to the other field. That's where the river goes over. So the pond was there, and then there's a pipe across that, the cold pipe. And we would dive from the pipe into the pond.

But the best part about swimming was when the [U.S.] Navy boats, or [U.S.] Marine boats, or whatever boats come in, they line up at the pier. Where the Pioneer Hotel [later, in the 1950s, known as Pioneer Inn] was, in front, the wharf there. They would come in, and we would dive for quarters, whatever they throw in the water, we would dive for it. That would be during the summertime that they would come. We would dive. And whatever we collect, time to go home, we would go to the shave ice store, called Yamamoto Store. And we would buy shave ice with the money. On our way home, the same time, we would go to the Morikawa Restaurant. We would buy the fry soup. They called that "fry soup" but it's the noodles. The nickname for that is fry soup. But the noodles, you know, is *chow fun*. You know, the fat thing. They would [serve] it in a [paper], cone-like thing. The cheapest one was five cents, fifteen cents, and then the quarter one was the big one. [According to *Historic Lahaina*, it was the Liberty Restaurant, owned by the Yamafuji family, that made and served the famous "fry soup."]

- WN: Yeah, it was like *chow fun* but it was in soup?
- BB: No, it's not a soup. It's *chow fun*. Actually, the name is *chow fun*, but in those days on the plantation we called it fry soup. You know, the noodles stuff. And the Morikawa family restaurant was famous for that. They were well known for that. They would be the one make the noodle thing, the *chow fun*.
- WN: Where were they, in Downtown?
- BB: In Lahaina, right on Front Street. In fact, people from Wailuku would stop by and buy those things. So, every summer when we go down the beach, or even during the regular days, on the weekends, we would stop by. We would never bypass the place. And then, there's another store, the last store as you going up Lahainaluna Road, going up to the [Lahainaluna] School, they called it Nakagawa Store. They sold ice cake in square blocks. Different colors: orange, strawberry, whatnot, you know. We would call that store the "guri guri store."

- WN: They sold guri guri [an ice cream treat, made famous on Maui] over there?
- BB: Yeah. The guri guri. Like in Kahului they have that . . .
- WN: Yeah, Tasaka?
- BB: Tasaka Guri Guri [Shop]. That store in Lahaina used to sell that, too. That, and the ice cake. And we would buy that before we go home. That was Nakagawa Store. Those three stores: Yamamoto Store was shave ice; Morikawa Restaurant, the *chow fun* and saimin, all that; and the guri guri store. Those were the three famous places we would stop by before we go home.
- WN: How did you get spending money?
- BB: When we go diving . . .
- WN: Oh, from the coins?
- BB: From the coins that we dive.
- WN: And how much like for one time diving, one day, how much would you get?
- BB: We would probably get about twenty-five dollars, like that.
- WN: In one day? Twenty-five dollars?
- BB: Yeah. You know, quarters. Some guys they throw half a dollar, like that.
- WN: How many of you would be diving?
- BB: Oh, plenty guys would be diving for the coins.
- WN: So, twenty-five dollars apiece?
- BB: Yeah, would be about twenty-five, because I remember getting twenty-five dollars, one day.
- WN: Wow.
- BB: There would not be just one vessel, would be several coming for liberty. They come in on that small boat, and when they come in the wharf, they start throwing the money to us.
- WN: So this is during the war, then?
- BB: Yeah, during the wartime. From 1941 till 1945. So we'd dive for the coins, and that's how we get our spending money. And then we go home. Other than that, those plantation days, we don't have the luxury of carrying so much money in your pocket, eh? So we would get, maybe dollar or two from them [parents]. What you like buy, you gotta buy. Those days were cheap, eh?

And when come to the movies, my parents would take us to the movies. We would go to either the Pioneer Theater, or Queen Theater. And next to the Queen Theater, there was a store that belonged to this classmate of mine, Kidani Store. And, you know, when get

break time in the movies, you come out and buy things, eh? So we'd run into the store and buy all those goodies and go back inside. And right across the Kidani Store would be the Seaside Bar [restaurant]. After the movie, we'd go across there and eat our saimin and whatnot, you know, with the family. In fact, when I got to be in high school, on the weekends, we would go to the movie. And after the movie, we would hang out across the street at the saimin stand. We would talk story over there before we go home. And those days, we had curfew, too, so we make sure that we leave there before ten o'clock.

WN: So what was Lahaina like during the war? I mean, when the soldiers were in town. You folks made money by diving, but did you make money any other way?

BB: Well, my brother folks used to shoe-shine. Most of the extra money was made by shoe-shine. The marines, the navy, and army, all that. And like I said, those days, the marines used to have their barracks called Citizens' Unit, below the mill, they used to be there. So they would go there and shine their shoes. My folks would pick up their laundry and wash for them, like that. Those days, any way to get some kind of extra money for the family. So the marines would get their laundry done by the [plantation] folks.

WN: Your mother did that?

BB: Yeah, my mom did that several times.

WN: Did you help her at all?

BB: No, I'm the rascal. I only run away.

(Laughter)

BB: Even to make the fire to boil the water to wash the clothes, or go find wood. I would say, "Yeah, yeah, yeah," but I would forget. When I come home, I would get abused again.

WN: Sounds like your mother worked really hard, though.

BB: Oh yeah. My mom worked really hard. When she was raising the pigs, at a certain age of the pig, she would have somebody slaughter 'em, cut the meat in pieces. Sell it.

And she would make Filipino sugar candy, *but-but*, they called that. They would sell it. Especially when come to the days when my dad would go fight chicken, eh? (Laughs) My dad would go there, bring his chicken, and we would go there.

WN: You used to go, too?

BB: I would go with them. My mom would bake all these eating stuff, and they would sell over there.

WN: How many people would be at these chicken fights?

BB: Oh, man, over 100. You know, those plantation days, the policeman won't bother. I remember (chuckles), I would never forget this. When we got there, the guys that were in charge of the ring, would ask us if we would be watchmen. We ask, "What you mean, watchmen?"

"You like make ten dollar or twenty dollar?" Me and my friend was over there, so he asked us, "You like be watchmen?"

I tell, "Yeah. What we going do?"

"You see the mango tree over here?" Because the chicken fight is below, eh? "Go climb the mango tree. You can climb the mango tree?"

"Yeah, yeah, we can."

"You stay up there, and you watch the road. And if you see the policeman car come, then you yell to us, 'The policeman coming.'" They going get raid, eh?

I tell 'em, "What? We going get paid before? You folks going run away. If we call 'policeman' you folks not going pay us."

"No, we pay you folks before that."

WN: Ten bucks?

BB: Ten bucks. That's big money, you know. So we climb the tree, my friend and I. And get mangoes up there. So we eating the mangoes. We no watch the road! (WN laughs) Here come the police car, making the raid. And we forget to yell! The guys get all caught. The policeman taking the names down. We stay on the mango tree, we no make noise.

(Laughter)

BB: We no make noise. After the police take 'em away. We stay on the tree, nobody like come down.

(Laughter)

BB: We busy eating the mango, forget to watch the road. And the policeman came, about two, three cars. Catch the guys. My dad was one of them, got caught. Paid fine, I don't know exactly how much.

WN: When had raid, what did they do, haul 'em away?

BB: Yeah, they haul 'em. They take 'em down to the police department in [Downtown] Lahaina. You know by the banyan tree? I know they had to go down there and pay something. That time, I don't know what they paid.

WN: Now, this happened one time, or did it happen plenty times?

BB: Plenty times. I'll never forget that. My dad, he got caught, he mad like hell because he was with me when the guy asked my dad if I could be the watchman. And my dad got caught, too, so when I got home, he mad with me. "How come you no tell, 'police, police, police?' You stay on top the tree for nothing. What you guys doing?"

"Watching the chicken fight."

WN: What about the plantation, did they mind that you folks had chicken fights?

BB: No, the *luna* didn't mind. They themselves were playing; they were betting (laughs).

WN: What about the *Haole* managers, like that? They didn't mind . . .

BB: Nah, they didn't say anything. They know it's culture, eh? It's just that, when people complain, then they had to make the raid. Whoever made the complaint, I don't know.

WN: Like, how many people would be there?

BB: Oh, over 100.

WN: Over 100. And then, was it always at the same place.

BB: Yeah, would be in the same place. Same place, same mango tree.

(Laughter)

WN: And your mother, you said, used to sell like, *but-but* . . .

BB: *But-but*, and all that kind stuff. *Bibingka* and . . .

WN: How did she sell it? Did she walk around . . .

BB: Yeah, yeah. She go walk around in the crowd. She get the basket, she go walk around. Even now, if you go up to Kam Bowl [in Honolulu], there's a lady that comes around when the people are bowling, she comes around with the basket selling the *lumpia*, like that. My mom used to sell *lumpia*, all those delicacies that even now days that you see, she would sell. In fact, when they slaughtered the pig, they know that she's going to the chicken fight area. What we'd do is---you know, the plantation used to sell ice. We would put the meat inside there and put the ice on so the thing no rot, and she would sell that over there. That's how my mom would make extra money.

WN: Was it only at the chicken fights that she sold . . .

BB: Yeah, she wouldn't go to any other place. Only the chicken fight.

WN: And how often would they have chicken fights?

BB: Oh, practically every month. You know, when get payday, eh? (Laughs)

WN: Wasn't only your mother selling. Had other people . . .

BB: Yeah, there's other ladies selling. You know, they get together. There's so many people there, and they have their families over there, too. So, they buy whatever they make. I always remember that, every time she brings, she knows exactly how much to bring. She don't make too much. Just make enough and she would sell all of it. She would come home without bringing home any extra.

(Laughs) Talk about the mango tree. I no kid you. My dad was so mad because he got caught and he had to go to the police department. And when I come home---I come home later, eh? My dad would get mad with me. "*Lōlō* boy, you! How come you no tell us the policeman come? The man pay you for climb the tree and what you been doing?"

"I watching the chicken." I forget watch the road, because only get one road that come in. Oh, I tell you. Those days, the chicken fights. Even today, they have that, but they always get raid.

WN: How many chickens did your father have?

BB: My dad had about three or four fighting chickens. And the rest of the chickens in the chicken coop that they had in the back, would be for eggs. You know, they lay the eggs, eh? For the family to eat.

WN: Mind if we stop here and continue another time?

BB: Yeah, we can.

END OF INTERVIEW

Tape No. 39-7-2-03

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Ben Bedoya (BB)

Honolulu, O'ahu

January 8, 2003

BY: Warren Nishimoto (WN)

WN: This is an interview with Ben Bedoya for the Pioneer Mill oral history project, on January 8, 2003, and we're at the McDonald's at Kāhala Mall. The interviewer is Warren Nishimoto.

Okay, Ben. Let's start. While you were going to Lahainaluna School, you started working for the plantation for the vacation time . . .

BB: Yeah, summertime.

WN: What did you do?

BB: For us, we were just summer work, so they assigned us to the fields. Where you gotta go *hō hana* the fields, or you gotta go *palipali*, where you have to use your pick and shovel, you know. During the summers, that's the only time we can work. Those days, I think the pay was about fifty cents an hour, if I remember right. We'd start about, let's say, six o'clock in the morning—get up at four o'clock just to get to the truck.

WN: Where did you get the truck?

BB: We would meet the truck at the Pioneer Mill office, below the mill, right in the stable area, where all the trucks would line up. We would look at the board and see our names, what truck we going to be on, who our *luna* going to be, and then you get on the truck. Sometimes we'd get our schedule: *palipali*, well, that means we gotta to go up Pu'ukoli'i somewhere, where the cane would already be harvested. What we'd have to do is clean up the field, make the line straight. That's where the pick and shovel comes in. When they harvest, the crane would damage the cane line, where the rows of cane goes. So we would go in there, dig it up, make it straight, and everything else.

WN: You mean, dig out the rocks?

BB: Yeah. The rocks are there, and we have to dig it out. Just make it into a ditch-like, for the cane—when they start to plant [the next crop].

WN: Oh, so these are like, empty fields?

BB: Empty fields, yeah. They would have some kind of tractor that would make the [furrows]. And we would go in there, straighten 'em out, before they plant the cane again. That's

what you call *palipali*. And when you talk about *hō hana*, you have your hoe, you go out in the fields, and try to clean up the sugarcane line, cutting the weeds in the line so the water could flow through.

WN: They didn't have poison, those days?

BB: Those days, we had poison. But they used it mostly only on the outside of the field. Not all the way inside. They would go in, so much, but when they use that, we don't go in. We were in another area where the weeds are hard to get to. But, those days, was good fun, because when the canes are taller than us, the *luna* get hard time finding us, eh? (Laughs) Like us, we get assigned so many lines to each person, you have to cover that before the day is over. For myself, I don't know whether I was plain smart, or plain stupid, but every time we would *hō hana* inside the field, we go about ten feet inside, fifteen feet, and we would hide from the *luna* after that. The *luna* cannot find us, the canes are so tall, eh? (Laughs) We'd goof off in there, and the *luna* would come. If he cannot find us, he would throw stones. We had to make sure that, if he throw stones, and landed too close to us, and somebody "Hey, what you doing?" He know we stay in there.

(Laughter)

WN: That's how he found you guys?

BB: Yeah, he smart. We thought we were smart, but we were the stupid one, because he start throwing stones just to find out where we are. And somebody would yell back, and he would know where we are, and he would come into the line, walk slowly in the line, find out whether we working or not. But we had ways of finding out whether he's coming. Somebody would whistle or something.

(Laughter)

WN: How big was your gang?

BB: We had maybe about ten, fifteen of us.

WN: And all boys, young . . .

BB: Sometimes it's mixed, get some girls inside there, like that.

WN: But all students, though?

BB: All students. Most of them are students. After the harvest, that's when we come in. But we had old-timers with us, sometimes. The old-timers are the ones mad at us because we goof off so much. All these *kolohe* boys, they don't like you (laughs). Once or twice, I think, if I remember right, we went in for *hō hana* and my dad was part of the gang. So he keeps scolding me because I kept goofing off, and the *luna* would report to him and tell, "Oh, your boy no good. *Moloā*, every time goof off." So my dad would come home and scold me. (BB speaks in heavy Filipino accent, imitating his father) "You no can do that kind stuff. *Bumbai* you get fired, you *pau*, you no more work. You need the money. So no fool around, no fool around." (Laughs) I only get lecture sometime. It just so happened that he would be on the same gang with us.

WN: So you guys got paid by the hour, or by the line?

BB: We were paid by the hour. Eight hours a day, fifty cents an hour, I remember, that time. When it come to payday time, we had that *bangō*—I wish I had my *bangō*—we would give it to my mom. My mom would go to the office and collect our paychecks. We didn't have to be there to pick it up. As long as she get the *bangō*. So everything went to my mom. And my allowance would probably be about, those days, five dollars, after everything else. Those days, everything was very cheap.

We worked kind of hard. During the summer, like us, mine was not really to work, eh? We like play, so was really hard to get up in the morning, four o'clock in the morning, just to get ready. My parents would make my lunch. We had that *kaukau* tin you know? A two-tiered *kaukau* tin. One [tier] would be for the rice underneath, and all the *okazu* on top. And we'd bring a thermos bottle for drinks.

WN: What did you guys eat?

BB: Those days, we ate Spam, deviled egg sandwich. For breaks, in the morning especially, we'd bring sandwich, like that. But for lunch, everybody put together, we had feast. All kind, you know.

WN: Oh, you guys shared sometimes?

BB: Shared. We'd sit together. Just put our tins together.

WN: Out in the field?

BB: Right there, in the field. It was fun. Those days, everybody share their food. We would have the Filipino *kaukau*; the Japanese *kaukau*. Some guys would bring *poi*. We know what it is, so we enjoyed it. But the best part about those days was after we *pau* eat lunch (chuckles). You know, you get about twenty minutes more before time to go back work. We would spread out into the fields (chuckles). By the time for start work again, the *luna* cannot find us, because (chuckles) we sleeping. Take him about twenty minutes just to get us back in the field to work. We sleep, because so hot, and, you know, after you *pau* eat, we lazy, eh? The *luna* would get so mad, he would blow his whistle, beee, beee! "Time to work! Time to work! *Hanahana! Hanahana!*" Some guys would pass out, they cannot find 'em. We no tell; we don't want to squeal on our friends, eh? He had to go look for himself.

But those were the days where the hardship was there, so we all think about helping out the parents, like that. So working in the fields was one of those things where I can look back, when I'm driving around the outside islands or out in Waialua side, or Wahiawā side, and see all those fields like that. My mind refers back to my days of work. From the time I got up in the morning, and all the kind of troubles I get with my *luna* and my dad (laughs). Sometimes I'll be driving out to Wai'anae side, 'Ewa Beach side, and I see these guys working out in the fields, I would laugh to myself. My friends in the car, "What the hell you laughing about?"

"Ah, I just looking at the old men out in the field. When I look at them, I see myself over there, thinking how the *lunas* would fire me every time." (Laughs) I was considered one of the laziest guys in the gang. The *luna* would be mad with me. Those days, when I think back now, I think, wow, I don't know how the families survived back then. And depression days, too, eh? Everything was hard.

One year, when the plantation went on strike—I forgot what year it was [1946]. Was really something else. Was really hard. I remember going down with my mom down to the plantation mill, where the Citizens' Unit (is located). The union people would cook for everybody. They called that soup kitchen, or soup line, or whatever. And I remember my mom and dad going down with a *kaukau* tin or pot, each family's share of the food. Those days, they pay [union] dues, so that's what it was. I didn't understand at that time why they have to be doing that, but I remember my mom and dad telling me why union [International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union] is good.

WN: You folks paid union dues when you were students?

BB: No, we didn't pay any dues. We weren't union. We were just summer work.

WN: I was wondering, how did you get the job?

BB: Well, actually it was word of mouth, that they were looking for people. They put the notice on the big plantation board. We'd just go to the plantation office and sign up. That's how we got the job. They would put a big notice on the bulletin board, "We're hiring for summer."

WN: Whoever applied got a job?

BB: Yeah, automatic, you get the job. Lot of the kids, my age that time. Not all of my friends was willing to work in the fields. They went to the [pineapple] cannery to work. You know, Baldwin Packers, they were hiring, too.

WN: Which was considered better job?

BB: You see, that's the thing. After working in the fields for so long in the summers, the boys tell, "Eh, why work in the hot sun when you can work in the Baldwin Packers at night." They get night shift.

And I told them, "I (won't have any) fun on the weekend, because they going put us on night shift." But, one day, my friend said, "Eh, good shift, you know. Nobody around. They give you the assignment, and you just work, work, all night. Better than the plantation, in the hot sun. Look at you, all black."

(Laughter)

BB: So I said, "Okay, I going try one time." So, I tried, at Baldwin Packers. I worked there only for about one summer. It was night shift.

WN: Night shift was what time to what time?

BB: We started from three to eleven [o'clock]. Sometimes we get overtime because of the job that we doing. I really didn't like it, because we were put in the warehouse side. You know, it's not working in the cannery side, where you work with pineapple. I was working in the warehouse side. You had to restack all those—I think it was sugar . . .

WN: Sugar bags?

BB: Sugar for the [canned] pineapple. Those bags were about fifty to hundred pounds. We had to stack 'em for the forklift. The guy would bring the pallet and you stack 'em. For

about three weeks I did that night shift job. I thought, ah, forget it, I quit. I got lazy. I didn't want that. I didn't want the night shift job.

WN: I was wondering, was the pay different?

BB: The pay was little different. The plantation was little less. But [the cannery] didn't strike me as being a good deal for me, because night shift, and I had to carry those heavy bags (laughs). Compared to the plantation, you only carry one hoe sometime, to go *hō hana*. But after working there for a short time, now that I look back, I think, maybe it [cannery] was a good job for me to stay in the shade.

After I graduated from school, I went in the [military] service with my classmate, we all signed up the same time. Went through army school, but when I got assigned to Korea, I ended up in the supply room. And up to the time I retired I worked in a supply room.

So, looking back at Baldwin Packers, that's where my future was in the first place. Because I was working in the warehouse. That's what I ended up doing (as manager) working in the supply room at Queen's [Hospital]. Maybe it was some kind of coincidence that I had that experience. So all in all, it was good, now as I look at it. Compared to now, the kids, to me, they don't really know what work really is. Like us, I come from a plantation family, from the bottom. Let's say, you can say, the "dirt." Working in the fields, compared to the modernized kind of job that the kids can have. Watching these kids getting all this kind beautiful cars like this, and you wonder. Those days, I couldn't even ride one bike; I never had a bike, you know. Looking at them, take you back to those days of hardship. You kind of think, wow, how I going to appreciate what is today, to give to my son, you know, my kids, like that. Plantation days was really rough. Now days, they don't have those plantation days, you know? So modernized now. You tell the kids go out in the fields, go work, they wouldn't even bother to go work.

Sometimes, now, I tell myself, I'm really happy I've learned through life all these hardships. I'm pretty sure lot of people say that, yeah, working in the plantation is something that you really experience, and you can never take away, you know. Once in a while I would talk to my son about how Grandpa used to work in the fields. Just to let him know that he didn't have to go through that. But, when you watch those kids now, the kind of things that they have, you think, how can the parents afford that? The way they talk, just like money is nothing. The values of what I went through, and a lot of my classmates and whoever went through the plantation days, they [the younger generation] can't compare to what we went through, the depression days, and all that. And I've seen the depression days, because you had to scrounge for everything. I look back and picture my mom and dad, scrounging for all the things they can get for us. And me, grumbling like hell because I have to go get up early in the morning go feed the pigs. Raise it, and then slaughter it, and then go sell it, just to make a go in life, for the family to have. And you compare those days and now, the kids tell the mom and dad, they like this. "Eh, we'll get it."

Just like that. When I think back and compare those days, I really feel that I've learned something through life. These kids, right now, will never compare. They can listen to us telling them the story, but I don't think it really sinks into them what our parents went through.

WN: You folks are Visayan, yeah? I was wondering, did your parents and you folks get along with Ilocanos . . .

BB: Oh yeah. There were Ilocanos, Visayans, and Hawaiians—it was just community feelings that we all get along together. Like I said before, we used to have community gatherings in one of those plantation buildings. The potluck—I remember those potlucks. Everybody, the whole community, came.

WN: This is up Mill Camp?

BB: Mill Camp. Now days, go to a banquet, or whatever party you go, just a gathering. But those days, the community one, is something that people cherish together. They bring them together. Banquets like these you go to now, wedding parties, like that, oh, you just meet them, like that. Those days, everybody brings things, and they share with one another. What you experienced those days is different compared to now. Those plantations days, depression days, they all try to work together.

WN: You guys were all in the same boat, too, eh?

BB: Yeah, the same boat, too. That's why, if you talk to the old folks, they would probably say, "Yeah, now days can't compare to what we went through." Working, going through school, the parents trying to do what they can for you, those kind of days.

WN: So you worked only summertime? You didn't work any other times . . .

BB: No, no. The jobs were for summertime.

WN: And you never got your paycheck? Your mother got it, and she gave you allowance?

BB: Yeah. Those days, everything went to my mom. My mom would go to the plantation office—she had our *bangōs*, and get our check. In fact, until today. . . . Like now, I'm retired now, my social security check. What I did, is that I don't make it come directly to me. Direct deposit, but it's under my son's account. Until today, I experience that allowance thing (laughs). I told my son that, you know, you folks need some help, so I just need so much. You just give me so much. He keeps the rest of whatever we need for the house. It's our land and whatever, we bought it, but he still needs the support. Until today. So I think of those days when I have to check with my son, "Eh, I like my check."

(Laughter)

BB: Just like asking for my allowance. My mom would give me so much. From the payroll, my mom would give me at least five dollars.

WN: Five dollars, what, a week? Or a month? Or . . .

BB: For the month. I never grumbled. Like I say, we were just growing up and we just trying to help the folks. Plantation days, I guess, thinking back, really give you the experience what you should do now. Compared to those days. You think back, Mom and Dad used to do this, and this is what they do, and it comes out okay. Why can't we do it now, eh?

WN: You said you did *hō hana* and *palipali*. Anything else besides those two jobs?

BB: When you work for the plantation, those days, you dealing with your pick, shovel, and hoe. When you do *palipali* that means you carry your tools, because when you go out there, you have to use your pick for digging the ditch, or whatever, and then you have your shovel to shovel the dirt. And the hoe is when you have to cut the weeds, making the

line straight, and all that kind of stuff. But I loved my *luna*, because (chuckles) he would tell us before we start working [BB mimics *luna*, with heavy Filipino accent], "Now, don't forget boys, you *da kine* make your line, straight curve, now." He make like that. In other words, he's telling us the curve gotta be little straight. "Bedoya, you *da kine*, make your line straight curve, now. Make straight curve (chuckles)" That's the way he talk, eh?

WN: He was what, first generation from the Philippines?

BB: Yeah, first generation Filipino, so their English is not that. . . . But, at first, I was getting hard time to understand what he mean by "straight curve." All he want me to do is make the line straight, right? And if there's a curve, then you going to make a curve, where the water going to flow. He would always tell us that, and I would laugh and he would get mad with me, because he's serious. He's the *luna*. He's telling us how the job supposed to be done, right? And me, I'm always the one getting scolding, because I'm the rascal, eh? (Laughs) Mr. Balinbin was one of the *lunas* that we used to have. And Yamaguchi. But Balinbin would be mostly ours. He would tell us about that "straight curve" and whatnot. And I would ask him that question, "Mr. Balinbin, what you mean, 'straight curve?' No more straight curve over here. Everything gotta make straight."

(Laughter)

BB: He would scold me. He'd say, "What the matter with you? You don't understand English? You go school, eh? Where you go school? Lahainaluna? You don't understand 'straight curve?'"

I wasn't making fun. I was trying to see what the hell he was saying. He would say, "You see that curve over there? You make straight, like that."

WN: (Laughs) He probably meant, make it neat, or something, yeah?

BB: Yeah, make it neat. Then I caught on (laughs). He thought I was making fun of him. He would watch me all day (laughs). He would stand in my area and watch me. And when I get tired, I would lean on my hoe, like this, putting my arm on the top of the hoe, and lean like that, underneath my armpit. And rest. He would whistle at me (laughs). "No fool around, you! *Hanahana!*"

He would yell at me, and my friends over there, they all laughing. "You going make him mad, that's why he's watching you." He watched me all day. So, when came to three o'clock he would blow his whistle for us to gather our tools and come back to the truck. He would remind me, "Bedoya!"

"Yes, Mr. Balinbin?"

"Don't forget, now. Tomorrow you come back. Don't forget, straight curve, now. Bring your same tools, don't forget."

WN: Where you guys got the tools from?

BB: Actually, we had to buy our own tools.

WN: Oh, you had to buy your own tools?

BB: Yeah, those days.

WN: From where, the plantation store?

BB: Yeah, the plantation store.

WN: And so what, at the end of the day, you bring 'em home?

BB: Yeah, you carry 'em home. You don't leave 'em. Unless, like I say, if we have to come back the next day, the same place, then the *luna* would tell us, "Oh, leave your tools there." You got to hide 'em in the line, or something like that. But, when you come back the next day, the tools are there, if you have to come back.

WN: So if you *palipali*, you had to buy the pick, shovel, and hoe?

BB: Yeah, you had to buy your own.

WN: And then, if you take 'em home you gotta walk from home to the truck, pickup, with your tools?

BB: Yeah.

WN: Oh, heavy yeah?

BB: That's why (chuckles) those days, when you wake up four o'clock in the morning, you don't want to carry anything. Only your *kaukau* tin (laughs). Like I say, my house would be, in the distance from where we are now, McDonald's [in Kāhala Mall, O'ahu] to here, would be a distance to where the church is. What do you call that church over here?

WN: The church? Which one?

BB: The one right here. 'Ainakoa [Avenue]. The distance.

WN: Star of the Sea?

BB: Yeah. About that distance. [Approximately three-quarters of a mile.] From there, we would cross over the railroad tracks to get to the trucks. Every morning, I would get up four o'clock. I would tell my momma, "I hate summer."

"Why?"

"I no like work! I lazy!"

My father and mother said, [BB speaks in heavy Filipino accent] "*Lōlō*, this boy. You like money, you go work; you no like money, no need go work! You no get nothing." They would talk to me in that language, you know. They don't say, "If you don't work, you won't have any money to spend." But in their talk, "You no work, no more nothing. *Lōlō*, you lazy. Go work!"

(Laughter)

"Go *hanahana*." Tomorrow, wake up four o'clock in the morning. Ah, forget it (chuckles).

So those were the plantation days. As far as getting the experience, I can never forget that. Like I said, driving around 'Ewa Beach, Wai'anae side, you know, when you see the sugarcane field burning like that, I would reflect on that.

Talking about burning, reminds me of when come Christmastime, you remember, you get those cane tops, the tassels? We would go in the field, and cut that. And we'd find a nice one, a thick one. And we'd put a nail inside. We'd tie 'em up, make an arrow out of that. And what we would do is put paper around that arrow, light it, and shoot 'em in the cane field as far as we can (laughs).

WN: How you shoot 'em?

BB: With a [bow]. We made a bow. We light [the arrow] and we shoot 'em far into the fields as we can. So, we would start a fire (laughs). We were that rascal, you know. But, we wouldn't shoot 'em in the field where it's still young yet. We shoot 'em where they going to harvest.

WN: (Laughs) Gotta burn 'em anyway, eh?

BB: Yeah. We can tell when they going to harvest the field because the old folks would push the cane back along the road. Push 'em back about maybe five, six feet in, back toward the field. And they would light 'em after that. But we would start 'em (laughs). But it only happened during Christmastime because they did a lot of harvesting. We'd start the fire with the arrow. That's why every time when I see the sugarcane fields and all the tassels coming out, I'd always look at that and reminisce, what we used to do. And like I told you before, every time get that kind of trouble, they'd come to my house (laughs). They'd come to me first, because I was the rascal, always in trouble. I would be the one questioned first. They know I'm lying, so they'll take me to the plantation office and question me there, make me scared, eh? So I would squeal (laughs). My friends get all pissed off, because I would get so scared and start squealing, eh?

(Laughter)

BB: So those were the days I think of when I see the sugarcane fields like that.

WN: How you guys got the bow? You made your own bow?

BB: Yeah, we just got a stick with the string, just enough to shoot. You know, bamboo.

WN: I was wondering, while you were working in the fields, did you ever think to yourself, "Oh, this is what I want to be, or this is what I don't want to be," or anything like that?

BB: (Laughs) Maybe I thought, "What the hell. I not going work this kind job the rest of my life. It's too hot." When I'd come home I'd grumble to my dad. "Papa, how you can work in the fields like that?"

"No, this is good job."

"For me, no way."

"That's why I like you study hard."

WN: He told you that?

BB: He told me to study hard. Because "if you don't study hard, you go do this kind job," you know. "That's why we like you go school and study and learn more, so you can graduate, get your diploma so you can go ahead. So you don't have to come work this kind. Maybe you can work in the office, or something like that."

"Oh yeah. Papa, I like that." (Laughs)

So we'd talk about the hardship if I have to work in the fields. He would remind me, "You gotta study, that's why Mama and Papa work hard, so that you can go school. Not only you, your brother, your sister, you have to go to school."

WN: So you made that connection between studying in school and not working in the fields.

BB: Right. I made up my mind. Do a little better, no fool around (laughs).

WN: Did you ever think that maybe you might be working for Pioneer Mill in something else, like the office or something, at any time?

BB: Well, I never did think about it at all. You know, I never did. At that time, like I say, the hardship was there, so I wasn't really planning the future. I just knew that this is not what I want to do, going in the fields the rest of my life. But what made me think about working in the plantation office, or like that, maybe I did once, but that's before I graduated. I was thinking, maybe the best opportunity is joining the service, getting free education after that. You know, give you extra money so when you get out, you go college or something like that. So that's what made me think about working in an office. So when I went in the service, that's when I thought, I'd better find something. That's how it came out. I came out as a supply man. And that's what I've been doing (since coming out of the service).

WN: Did anybody tell you though, when you graduated, oh, come work plantation, or anything like that?

BB: No, no. See, what happened was, before the graduation, all my classmates, majority of my classmates, volunteered for the army. After graduation, when we volunteered to go in the army, we all went together. We went to Ford Ord [California]. In 1954, after graduation, took our basic training there. And we were in the company. Lot of my classmates were together in the company. In fact, if I remember right, we were the first boys from Hawai'i formed a Hawai'i company. We were the first to have all Hawai'i boys together in one company. After that, I went to school, came back, and I started to work in the supply. And thank God, now I working in the shade (laughs).

And I remember after the service, we had our first class reunion. That was 1957 when we came out. The person in charge of it, had us together, said, "What we'd like to do now is, since we haven't seen each other for the last four years since we graduated, we'd like to have each one of us say a few words of what you've been doing, where were you, and all that kind stuff. What kind job you have, and so forth."

So when it came to me, I said, "I'm glad that I'm out of the service, because what I learned in there was 'goof off.'"

(Laughter)

BB: They all laugh at me. "What do you mean, 'goof off?'"

"When you go in the service you learn to get away from jobs. You learn to play along with the higher-ranking guys in charge of you. And I've learned that." When I went in I had a sergeant above me that wanted a supply man, so he looked up my record and said, "Oh, you automotive man?" The company I was in was in automotive supply. So he said, "Do you want to be a supply clerk for us?"

I said, "Oh yeah." So I (became their company) supply clerk. And from there, that's how I got experience to be a supply man. And what I liked best was, "Look, I carry pen and pencil in my pocket. I'm a big shot. That's my job. That's what I do, push pencil."

They all laughed at me. "Ben, you still the same. Never change."

I said, "Yeah, that's my job. I'm a warehouse manager now, for this company. But I love it, I only carry pencil." (Laughs)

WN: So you never saw yourself as a field worker, yeah?

BB: I never see myself as a field worker anymore, no.

WN: What if you ended up having to work in the field . . .

BB: Well, if I happened to end up in the field, you know, working in the field, I think my memory would go back to what my dad used to do, you know, being in hardship. I would really think more about myself, working the way my dad did, I don't want my family to see me suffer like this, doing hard work. That's how I picture that, so that's why I stayed away from coming back to plantation to work. I wanted to just start my life anew, with something else, other than working for the plantation. That's how I got away from the plantation. I think I could have gone back home and worked for the plantation, with my experience in supply work. Maybe apply for warehouse work, or something like that.

WN: Let's talk about Lahaina, now. What are your feelings about the changes that have taken place in Lahaina?

BB: Lahaina, like I say, everything changes, but as far as the tradition that they have there, the old folks still linger on to that. And I linger on to that old tradition. But I don't see it anymore, because they are so modernized. Everybody is looking ahead, you know, they are not really looking back on the traditions that they had. The community, the people that were there who grew up with me and all that, is not there anymore. Only the old folks. [People] my age is all scattered. When I go back, all the old places I used to hang out, all the places I used to make rascal and everything, is not there anymore. I only can visualize what was there. The modern Lahaina is only go-go-go type.

WN: What do you think should be preserved in the future about Lahaina?

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

BB: First of all, I hope that nobody suggest that they take away the [historic] banyan tree [on Front Street]. The banyan tree is the most historical part about Lahaina. People from all

over the state know what the banyan tree means. Secondly, if they can preserve all those old buildings.

WN: You mean, right on Front Street?

BB: Front Street. Or maybe if they can preserve some of those old plantation homes. I'd like to see that. Like, in Waipahu, they have that old plantation homes, the [Hawai'i] Plantation Village. If they can get some of those homes and maybe move it into an area where they can make a museum-like thing, how the depression days were and whatnot, that's what I like to see.

WN: What about the mill?

BB: The mill, like I said before, if they could only save it the way they saved Kahuku, and remodel the darn thing. Keep it the same way they have it. I went to Kahuku [Sugar Mill]; I walked in there and I see all the big sugarcane grinders and all that. They still had that. I don't think you have to keep everything, but things that they can rebuild or keep it as is, in the same spot where it is.

WN: You mean, like what they did with the [Baldwin Packers] cannery?

BB: Yeah, so that people can remember and can see what Lahaina was, and how the plantation used to be. That's what I'd like to see: preserve as much as possible the old buildings. In Lahaina, you have the Pioneer Inn. And then you have the Baldwin House. And you have Front Street. Right now Front Street is more modernized, but you still have that building, the old Lahaina Store. Maybe they can preserve that, in the historical sense of the plantation days. That store is one of the plantation stores where people would come and buy their food from. That's where they ordered their food, rice and whatnot.

WN: Some people say that, if anything, they should preserve the [mill] smokestack.

BB: Well, if they can't preserve the building itself, then the smokestack will symbolize a plantation, life in the Pioneer Mill. I think if they can preserve that, I'm for it. At least we get something standing there that belongs to the Lahaina people. Pioneer Mill. Because when I go home—I lived in Honolulu for over thirty-something years after graduating from school, and [military] service, and whatnot—and when I got home and see the Pioneer Mill, it really gives me the feeling that, wow, this mill has been here so many years. I'm sixty-eight years old and look, it was there before I—you know, over 100 years. Now they say they want to close it down. Like us, we're still sad because we went through the depression days. To see that thing taken away like that . . .

WN: How did you feel when Pioneer Mill said they were going to close?

BB: When they said Pioneer Mill was going close, I felt sad, because, like I said, my age people and people older than I am, when they hear that Pioneer Mill was going close, the whole picture of the plantation days comes back to me. The time I grew up, all the cane fields around there, the sugar mill, how things were, how the houses were—the old folks' houses, and how they used to be together. I told myself, oh shit, why they want to close it? Why don't they preserve it? I'm sure the sugar mill, the way it was going, it was not going to last. But to say you're going to shut down, and tear it down, kind of hurt my feelings. I ran and played hide-and-seek in that mill over there. And running back and forth up the fields. Walking around with my brothers. It kind of made me sad; really, really sad. But now that they're fighting to at least preserve the smokestack, I think the

community should get behind that. Amfac should at least understand that they should at least support us—the community that wants the stack. Like here, O‘ahu Sugar [Company], there’s nothing. It’s down and gone. They haven’t preserved anything, no smokestack, no nothing.

WN: The mill is gone? They tore the mill down?

BB: O‘ahu Sugar? I think they closed ‘em down, eh?

WN: The mill is still there, though, I think.

BB: The mill is still there, but I think they slowly taking it away. I don’t know whether the community supports that thing, but like I say, all those mills, like C&H sugar mill [the former ‘Aiea sugar mill] is gone.

WN: Oh, ‘Aiea?

BB: Yeah, ‘Aiea.

WN: That’s gone.

BB: When I used to work in the supply room for my company, I used to visit C&H in ‘Aiea, the sugar mill. Every time I walked in there, I smelled all this sugar. You know the smell? Remind me of home. So preserving the stack, if that’s the best part of it, I’m for it. But if you ask me how I felt when I heard it was closing, it kind of saddened me. Wow, those buildings have been there for years. It’s just like one big house. To me, Pioneer Mill is just like one big house. The community went into it. That’s the way I feel. That’s the way the old folks, and myself working there summertimes, heart and soul was in that mill itself. What we harvest—what my folks and friends and relatives—their heart and soul was in Pioneer Mill. In any way, I would support to at least save the stack. People say that maybe cannot save ‘em, but if there’s a possibility. . . . Amfac would probably help us preserve that, and then have the community support behind them. They’re the ones that need to take the foothold on those things. The community I’m pretty sure—like myself—I would be willing to donate whatever I can. But I would say, if they can’t save the building itself, at least save the stack. That’s the heart and soul of that building; and the Pioneer Mill [Company] is the heart and soul of that whole community.

WN: Well, it’s a landmark.

BB: Yeah, it’s a landmark. The history of Pioneer Mill, plus the school itself above that, it coincides. Because the people who got educated at Lahainaluna are the ones that really worked in the Pioneer Mill.

WN: The parents . . .

BB: Right, the parents that worked there. And who supported them going to school, like that. If you ask me, I was sad when I heard about that. I heard Big Island was the first to shut down: Onomea Sugar Company and all that. I wish they save the stack. If they can’t save the mill itself. The landmark is the smokestack. Get the sign say, “Pioneer Mill” eh?

WN: Yeah, has the year, I think, up there, eh?

BB: Yeah. That’s my feelings and love for Lahaina.

WN: So, before I turn off the tape recorder, I have to ask you one more question. You know, future generations are going to be reading what you're saying about your upbringing and your values, and your plantation experience. What do you want future generations to learn about Lahaina, Pioneer Mill, your generation? The most important things?

BB: I think I would like my son folks to remember what their grandparents, or great-grandparents did in Lahaina. How we was brought up by them. What they suffered through the depression days. Those things gotta be passed on to them by myself. And then my kids can tell their grandsons what Grandpa did, and what Great-grandpa did for them. That's what I'd like to see preserved. The sons and daughters that went through this, like the way I did, keep talking to them. Remind them about those days. Tell them of Lahaina. You know, you don't have to tell them the whole story all at once, but every little chance you get, when they start talking about Lahaina, "Oh, we used to do this, we used to do that." The fun things, the sad things, the hardships, and all that. You put 'em all together, that makes you closer to the kids and the future. This is how it was, how I was brought up.

The more the old folks in my generation now continue to feed back to their children what Lahaina was and what grandparents did. I think those historical things will be remembered. As long as people can explain what really is Lahaina. When they go back home to visit grandparents, explain to them what really is Lahaina; what the community did together. That's the only way I can say it. I'm pretty darn sure, lot of these kids, they would go back to Maui to visit, and they would say, "Oh, my grandparents came from Lahaina, let's go over, go see." And from there, if they hear stories about it, that's how you keep it alive, right? By hearing stories and passing it on to one another. That's what I like to see. Lahaina people continue to talk about Lahaina. Those things will come back. You know, the *kolohe* days (laughs).

WN: Well, seems like you did a lot of fun things (laughs).

BB: *Kolohe* stuff.

WN: Thank you. Good place to end. Thank you very much.

BB: Thank you.

END OF INTERVIEW

PIONEER MILL COMPANY:

A Maui Sugar Plantation Legacy

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